RESPONSIVE WORSHIP.

BUDINGTON.

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2 November 1893.

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RESPONSIVE WORSHIP;

A DISCOURSE, WITH NOTES,

BY

WM. IVES BUDINGTON, D.D.,

AND LETTERS FROM

REV. DRS. G. B. BACON, L. BACON, N. J. BURTON, H. BUSHNELL, T. J. CONANT, O. E. DAGGETT, E. P. GOODWIN, R. S. STORRS, JR., AND T. D. WOOLSEY.

Affirmabant autem, hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem.—*Ep. Plinii. X. 97.*

A. S. BARNES & COMPANY,
NEW YORK AND CHICAGO.
1873.

PREFACE.

THIS little book is given to the public in the hope that it may contribute to the improvement of public worship in some of its methods. The sermon was prepared in answer to a request made in the middle of the week, and preached extemporaneously in part, the following Sabbath, as a contribution towards the discussion of the question then before the church. The writer has endeavored to make it more worthy of publication, by careful revision, as well as by the addition of notes, and especially by the letters appended, which were drawn forth from the several writers by the report of the sermon, as originally published in the *New York Daily Witness.* The concurrence of so many cultivated minds, acting independently, and in so distinct spheres, is certainly a significant fact, and warrants the most thoughtful consideration of this subject on the part of our ministers and churches. The hope is cherished, that as the result of such mature consideration, an impulse will be

given to the worship of the Sanctuary, until it shall become at once spiritual and attractive, and by meeting the deeper and truer wants of the people, displace the tendency to merely ornamental and artistic performances. While speaking especially and almost exclusively of responsive worship in the use of the Psalter, the writer has no desire to press this method unduly; it is but one means among many of enlisting the interest and participation of the congregation; and his principal object will be attained, if he helps in any way the spirit and practice of congregational worship.

The Clinton Avenue Church have adopted the Order of Worship, which has been observed for several years in the Church of the Pilgrims. It is as follows:

MORNING SERVICE.

I. After a suitable prelude on the organ, the first measures of the tune Old Hundred are played, and the congregation rise, without notice from the Minister, and sing the DOXOLOGY:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow:
Praise Him, all creatures here below:
Praise Him above, ye Heavenly Host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

II. THE PRAYER OF INVOCATION is offered by the Minister, [the congregation bowing down.]

III. THE OPENING HYMN is read by the Minister, and sung by the choir and the congregation, [all standing.]

IV. A portion of THE HOLY SCRIPTURE is read by the Minister, [the congregation sitting.]

[When a Chant is sung congregationally, two Lessons may be read from Holy Scripture, one from the Old Testament, and the other from the New. The *Gloria Patri* is sung at the end of each Chant. (The congregation stand during the chanting.)

V. THE PRAYER OF GENERAL SUPPLICATION is offered by the Minister, [the congregation bowing down,] and at the close of it is repeated, by both Minister and people, THE LORD'S PRAYER.

[After the prayer the choir may chant a brief Scriptural selection without notice from the pulpit.]

VI. A Lesson from THE PSALTER is announced by the Minister, and is read by him and the congregation responsively, [all standing]; and at the close thereof is sung by the choir and the congregation the ancient DOXOLOGY:

> *Glory be to the Futher, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

VII. After these acts of Prayer and Praise [the congregation having resumed their seats,] any NOTICES may be given by the Minister, of religious meetings for the week to come, or of other matters suitable to be brought on the Lord's Day to the knowledge of the Church; and then

VIII. A HYMN, or CHANT, announced, but not read by the Minister, is sung by the choir, [the congregation still sitting.]

IX. This is followed by THE SERMON.

X. After the Sermon the CLOSING HYMN is read or announced by the Minister, and is sung by the choir and the congregation, [all standing.]

XI. THE PRAYER FOR A BLESSING ON THE WORD is offered by the Minister; and at the end of it [while the congregation are still bowed down,] he pronounces THE BENEDICTION:

> *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*

NOTE.—When Children are to be baptized, they must be presented for that ordinance at the Morning Service, on the proper Sundays, immediately after THE PRAYER OF INVOCATION.

When Collections are to be taken for charitable objects, they may follow either the NOTICES, or the SERMON, at the discretion of the Minister.

EVENING SERVICE.

I. After a suitable prelude on the organ, a brief CHANT or ANTHEM is sung by the choir, [the congregation sitting.]

II. THE OPENING HYMN is read by the Minister, and sung by the choir and the congregation, [all standing.]

III. A portion of THE HOLY SCRIPTURE is read by the Minister, [the congregation sitting.]

IV. THE PRAYER OF GENERAL SUPPLICATION is offered by the Minister, [the congregation bowing down.]

V. A Lesson from THE PSALTER is announced by the Minister, and is read by him and the congregation responsively, [all standing]; and at the close thereof is sung by the choir and the congregation the ancient DOXOLOGY:

> *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

VI. After these acts of Prayer and Praise [the congregation having resumed their seats,] any NOTICES may be given by the Minister, of religious meetings for the week to come, or of other matters suitable to be brought on the Lord's Day to the knowledge of the Church; and then

VII. A HYMN, or CHANT, announced, but not read by the Minister, is sung by the choir, [the congregation still sitting.]

VIII. This is followed by THE SERMON.

IX. After the Sermon the CLOSING HYMN is read or announced by the Minister, and is sung by the choir and the congregation, [all standing.] At the end of this hymn a DOXOLOGY, in the same metre, is usually added without being announced.

X. THE PRAYER FOR A BLESSING ON THE WORD is offered by the Minister; and at the end of it [while the congregation are still bowed down,] he pronounces THE BENEDICTION:

> *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*

This form of worship, as will be seen, is very simple, and differs but slightly from that in common use; but the difference, slight as it is, is a pervasive leaven to quicken and transform the whole service. It is warmer, more social and devotional. Some might desire the recitation in unison of the *Apostles' Creed;* and, as Dr. Woolsey suggests in his letter, it would be grateful to very many, as to him, to have "some of the best, small chants regularly introduced, such as "*The Lord is in his Holy Temple, let all the earth keep silence before him,*" and "*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.*" 35th Chant in Songs for the Sanctuary. When such men as the venerable Ex-President of Yale College testify, that they never hear these simple chants, "without the profoundest feelings being excited, and would go no small distance to have them renewed," it is surely incumbent on our churches to provide for such wants, and consider whether they may not both deepen and extend the power of Christian worship by such provisions.

If this discourse shall, in any measure, contribute to this good end, the author will be abundantly repaid for the publication.

CLINTON AVE. CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
Brooklyn, N. Y., April 29, 1873.

RESPONSIVE WORSHIP.

And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God. Amen. St. Luke 24: 52, 53.

THE earthly life of our Lord ends with his ascension. That closing scene was marked by an act of benediction on his part, and of worship on the part of the disciples. "He lifted up his hands and blessed them, and while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him." So the curtain drops upon the Gospel history; and when the curtain rises again, in the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, it reveals the infant church still in the attitude of worship. First of all we find them in "the upper room" of a private house, "with one accord in prayer and supplication," and also "continually," that is, at the appointed hours,

"in the Temple praising and blessing God." The history of Christ began in worship, the heavenly host praising God over the plains of Bethlehem, and ended in worship, as the disciples saw him ascend into the heavens. So the history of the Christian Church began, as it will end, in worship. The individual Christian also is born in an act of worship, and when he dies and becomes immortal, worship becomes his eternal life. No subject, therefore, so concerns the Church and the Christian as this; and no question takes precedence of this, How can Christian worship be most fitly expressed, and its spirit most deeply felt? How was it, in point of fact, rendered in those wonderful days of praise and prayer, which followed the ascent of our Lord, and which issued in the inauguration of the Church by the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost?

The first thing the disciples did, after the ascension, was to pay our Lord the homage of divine adoration. We are sure it could have been nothing less than this. They had seen the heavens open, and the form of Jesus rising from the midst of them, till a cloud received him out

of their sight; and at such a time, after what they had witnessed of his death and resurrection, it must have been divine worship they rendered. Descending the Mount, and passing the Garden of Gethsemane, they are not chilled by recollections of the place; all sorrow is swallowed up, now, in the glory of the Resurrection, completed and sealed by the Ascension; and they re-enter the holy city with a joy which finds expression in daily attendance and with one accord upon the Temple, "praising and blessing God."

If we ask the question, How did these first praises of the jubilant and expectant Church find expression? we may be quite sure it was, along with prayer, by the use of the Psalms. Those Psalms had come down to them from the time of David, and had been the organ of praise to the ancient Church, each generation finding more precious the hallowed forms which had borne aloft to God the thanksgivings and supplications of their kings and prophets. In these words David had worshipped God, and his people with him; so Hezekiah, and all the congregation with him, "with the words of David and of Asaph the Seer;" so Ezra and Nehemiah. When the

foundations of the Second Temple were laid, "all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord."

Not only were the Psalms used, but they were used responsively. In his description of the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, Nehemiah says that he "brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one went on the right hand, and the other company went over against them; so stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of the Lord, and I and the half of the rulers with me." Neh. 12 : 31. Many of the Psalms were evidently constructed for this antiphonal or responsive use; and it is matter of Scriptural testimony that they were so used. In the psalm of thanksgiving, at the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant of God, it is written, "Let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord;" and the historical fact is also on record, that "all the people said Amen, and praised the Lord." Psalm 106 : 48. Cf. 1 Chron. 16 : 36. The 136th Psalm is especially remarkable in this respect, every strain of the Psalmist being responded to

by the answer, "For his mercy endureth for ever." These responses appear to have been sung either by a choir, or the people, or both together. Or rather, it was not so much a singing, as an "Oriental style of *declamation*, with a lively modulation of the voice," a method of recitation more nearly allied to the reading than to the singing of our times.* The antiquity of this mode of worship is one of the most interesting facts in the Bible; it dates back to the time of Moses, as his song on the triumphant passage of the Red Sea witnesses, when to the chorus of men's voices, led by Moses, Miriam and all the women answered, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Ex. 15:21.

There can be no doubt that Jesus and his apostles worshipped God in the use of the Psalter. The synagogue worship† was modelled upon that of the Temple, and Christian worship, again, upon them both. When a member of the congregation in Nazareth, and until his

* Lange's Psalms. p. 23. † Note I., p. 43.

showing unto Israel, our Lord, in all probability, joined in the recitation of the Psalms; and when he observed the Passover, and instituted the Sacrament of the Supper, he sang a hymn, or rather *the* hymn—for we know that it was composed of the 115th and 118th Psalms. So Paul and Silas "sang praises to God at midnight;" or *praying, they sang praises.* The distinction we make they did not, between praying and singing, differing, as these do, in form only, not in essence. They mingled praises and prayers, gliding from one into the other unconsciously, in the use of the Psalms, and no one can use them and do otherwise. The Psalter was the earliest Christian hymn-book, although from the very beginning it is probable that Christian hymns were composed—we may even have verses from them in the letters of St. Paul—but they were formed after the model of the Psalms of David, and not only recited, but recited or sung responsively, as the Psalms were.

Of this last fact we have singularly strong evidence. The New Testament has traces of it. The Apostle Paul says to the Ephesians (5 : 19), "speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns," or

to *one another*, as modern scholars render it, and as our translators have done in the parallel passage to the Colossians (3 : 16), where he exhorts them to "teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." There seems to be a reference here to responsive worship; and this reference is rendered still more probable by what we know, from other sources, of the earliest Christian worship. About A.D. 110, Pliny* wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan, in which he gives us the earliest and most important information to be derived from any Roman writer of repute, respecting the Christian assemblies of the first century. To certify himself what they did when they came together, on a stated day, before light, he put some of them to torture, and reported what he learned to his imperial master at Rome. Among other things was this in particular, that they were accustomed to utter, *i.e.*, to say or to sing, "*responsively among themselves*, a song of praise to Christ as God."† This testimony, taken in connection with the usage of the Jewish Church,

* Note II., p. 45.

† Dorner. Person of Christ. Vol. I., 165.

makes it certain that the use of the Psalms, in the way of responsive recitation or chanting, is the most ancient form of worship known in the Church of Christ. It certainly belonged to the earliest and purest ages of the Church; we confidently trace it back to the martyrs and confessors of the time, when worship was most dangerous, and we may well believe most spiritual. So they praised God in the subterranean catacombs of Rome, and lifted up their voices where no human ear could hear them, beside their martyred brethren asleep in Jesus. All our sources of information unite in testifying to the extreme simplicity of the first Christian worship. Justin Martyr,* writing not long after Pliny in the second century, says, "On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities, or in the country, gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together

* Justin Apol., chap. 67.

and pray, and when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president, in like manner, offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons."

Basil,* writing in the fourth century, and describing the order of worship which they had inherited from ages of severe persecution, says, "The customs which now prevail among us, are consonant and agreeable to all the churches of God. For with us the people, rising early, whilst it is night, come to the house of prayer, and there, with much labor and affliction, and contrition and tears, make confession of their sins to God. When this is done, they rise from prayers, and dispose themselves to psalmody; sometimes dividing themselves into two parts, they answer one another in singing, or sing alternately; after this again they permit one alone to begin the psalm, and the rest join in the close

* Bingham's Antiquities, Book XIII., 10, 13.

of every verse. And thus with this variety of psalmody they carry on the night, praying betwixt whiles, or intermingling prayers with their psalms. At last when the day begins to break forth, they all in common, as with one mouth and one heart, offer up to God the psalm of confession—the Fifty-first Psalm—every one making the words of this psalm to be the expression of his own repentance."

Such was Christian worship, at a time when to worship Christ at all was a felony. It was distinctively congregational, common, responsive, at a time when, to avoid persecution and death, it was conducted by night, and under ground; but when it was brought above ground, little by little, the rights of the people were taken away from them, the ancient practice of responding fell into disuse, and was supplanted by more artistic forms, till the whole service was conducted by the priest—for, by this time, the minister had become a priest—and by the choir, to which were assigned the duties and privileges of the congregation. In Roman Catholic congregations the people are, for the most part, silent, alike in prayer and praise. But the

people in a multitude of Protestant churches are equally silent; the minister and choir do all the praying and all the praising, and the congregation retain not even a reminiscence of their lost rights. It is a loss that involves the very essence of Christianity, and has to do vitally with the divine charter of the Church. "Ye," says the Apostle Peter, "are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices,* acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And to whom did he say this? To any class in the Christian Church? Evidently not; but to the people, "strangers scattered throughout Asia Minor, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." It is a distinctive feature of the Christian religion and church, that all Christian believers are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." To obscure this truth is to darken the Gospel; to lose it out

* Note III., p. 47.

of mind and out of practice, is to lose the sweetest privilege of the children of God. This chiefly distinguishes Christianity from Judaism; this is the chief defence the Church has against the assumptions and domination of that priesthood, who, as "lords over God's heritage," were the first to corrupt, and have longest enslaved the churches of Christ. Justin Martyr,* in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, writing a hundred years after St. Peter, says, "We are the true high-priestly race of God, as even God himself bears witness, saying that in every place among the Gentiles sacrifices are presented to Him well-pleasing and pure. Now God receives sacrifices from no one, except through his priests." Common worship grows out of, and is vitally connected with, the doctrine of the priesthood of all Christians; and it is historically true, that purity of doctrine in this regard, and popular forms of worship, have flourished or decayed together.

Of late years increased attention has been given to the subject of worship, and the best

* Chap. XVI., Fairbairn's Revelation of Law, p. 302.

means of popularizing it. Special thought and labor has been bestowed upon congregational singing, and with happy results, both in this country and Great Britain. The nonconformist churches of England,* have introduced the chanting of the Psalms just as we have them in our Bible, and it has added wonderfully to the interest and power of public worship. In the United States a tendency exists to introduce the reading of the Psalter by minister and people responsively; and this has already been done by a number of our Congregational churches. When one calls to mind the history of this mode of worship, that it ante-dates the Christian era, and belonged to the Church in her purest days, it would seem impossible to object to it on the score of innovation, and still more impossible, as not in keeping with the simplest and most Christian way of worshipping God. It is nothing more than the reading of Holy Scripture by minister and people, in orderly succession; and though never heard of before, it would surely be a harmless and proper thing. There

* Note IV., page 49.

is nothing hierarchical about it, but the reverse. A minister even is not needed, only a precentor or leader; and not so much as this, for, as in old times, the congregation, divided into two companies, might respond to one another. It puts it into the power of any people, however humble, to worship by themselves, without help from outside. It makes Hymn-book and Bible into one. Christians might worship in this manner in sparse neighborhoods and missionary districts, where no minister has come, and where the people are too few and too poor to support one even in part. Nay, more than this, where men cannot read, and where they have no books, even were they able to read, it would be possible, in this way, for the people to maintain the worship of God among themselves, and with some variety and interest. The 136th Psalm seems to have been written to meet a case similar to this. It rehearses the events of Jewish history, distinct and memorable manifestations of God's mercy to that people, and with each separate mention of the goodness of God, comes the response, "For his mercy endureth forever"—a verse so short that every child's memory is capa-

ble of retaining it, and so appropriate that the most instructed worshipper might repeat it with pleasure and profit. So that, in any community, where a single person able to read can be found, and any one able to pray and exhort, by aid of this simple and ancient usage, without minister, without singer, without ordination and ordinances, the true worship of God might be maintained, and with a sanctity that now makes the catacombs of Rome a more consecrated place than St. Peter's with its "Pantheon hung in air."

It would surely be a matter of just surprise, that any Christian, or any body of Christians, recognizing the divine authority of the Scriptures, and reverencing the usages of the Church in its earliest and best ages, should object to this mode of worship, as a departure from the teachings of the New Testament, and an innovation upon the simplicity and spirituality of Christian worship. Such objection would be proof only how insensibly some have drifted away from historic Christianity, and allowed the common inheritance of all churches of Christ to be involved in the schisms consequent upon modern contro-

versies. If we were called upon to give a warrant from Holy Scripture for our present universally accepted "service of song in the House of the Lord," what authority could we bring for using metrical versions of the psalms, and hymns of uninspired writers?* A metrical version of a psalm, however, and a hymn usually so called, are so much alike that the distinction of name has been dropped in modern books. I am not saying anything against this mode of worship. It is the outgrowth of our necessities and the fruit of our Christian liberty to order the worship of God's house so as to make it attractive and useful. But if any one objects to the use of the Psalms, as we have them in the Bible, and the recitation of them responsively, I remind him that this form of worship has more authority and sanction than any other. If we must have a "Thus saith the Lord," we have it pre-eminently for these two parts of divine service—the reading of Holy Scripture, and the responsive recitation or singing of the Psalms.

It is said our Puritan fathers did not use the

* Note V., p. 56.

Psalms in this manner. Neither did they allow the reading of the Bible as a part of worship; coming, as they did, from a form of worship in which reading was so disproportioned as to be exclusive, they forbade the reading of the Bible altogether, except in the way of exposition. The Puritans came out of the fire of persecution, the smell of it was on their garments, and they fell into extremes, which in them were pardonable, but in us would be ridiculous. They forbade their ministers performing the rites of marriage, because in the Roman Catholic Church it was one of the sacraments, and they would prevent all misconception or misrepresentation of the difference in this respect between them and Romanists, and hence they required marriages to be legalized by the civil magistrate. So they inhibited their ministers praying at funerals, and this, because Roman Catholics prayed for the dead; and they would prevent all, even the most ignorant, making a mistake as to their belief on this point. In these particulars, and in many others, we have departed from the practices of our fathers.

But in this departure from their usages, we have only been obeying the principles of the

Pilgrims, who had the good sense and Christian magnanimity to leave their descendants as free to choose as they were. John Robinson, their pastor, when bidding good-by to the half of the church that left Holland for New England, charged them not to imitate Lutherans and Calvinists, who would go no further than Luther and Calvin led them. "He charged us," said Gov. Winslow, "to follow him no further than he followed Christ; and if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it as we were to receive anything by his ministers; for he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy word." Accordingly the Pilgrims never laid any yoke of authority upon any soul, or any church. When they issued to the world their views of Christian doctrine, and of Church polity, they were careful to say that they claimed no authority for even these most sacred and fundamental deliverances; they were only declaring, they said, what they, for their part, thought true, and they left their descendants, nay, they required their descendants to think and decide for themselves

with a freedom, unimpaired by any act of theirs, and subject only to the truth and spirit of God. There is nothing sublimer in all the history of religious opinions than this abnegation of the right to control the conscience of Christian men, or determine the belief and the worship of Christian churches.

They had their usages in the exercise of their freedom; we have our usages in the exercise of an equal freedom. With a great price did our fathers buy this freedom for themselves, and with great solemnity did they bequeathe it to those who should come after them. For us, therefore, not to use this liberty, but to consider ourselves bound by forms of worship which they did not adopt either for themselves or for us, but which, in point of fact, have grown up since their time, is to stultify ourselves and dishonor them. We have not even the poor defence of doing what they did, while we wholly mistake their principles. They had the dignity of being *freemen*, in ordering the house of God as they saw fit in the light they had; but we, if we make their acts into arbitrary laws to control our conduct, make ourselves *slaves*, and there-

fore not their children, even when we suppose we most closely resemble them. To refuse to think for ourselves, judge for ourselves, and worship God, as we intelligently decide to be most for his glory and our good, and our children's; to do this in the name of the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, as Congregationalists bound to immobility by the traditions of our polity, is, if ignorance be not the apology, flat treason. In consolidated and centralized churches, where the local congregation has not the right to depart from the letter of a constitution, or the decision of a church judicatory, the loss of this liberty is counterbalanced by the action of the body as a whole. But with us, in the inheritance of a polity which is for substance the independence of the local church, not to use this independence is to forfeit our distinctive privilege, without acquiring the benefits belonging to a strong and compacted government. Take from the Puritan his doctrine of freedom of conscience in the name of Christ, and you take from him his crown as one of the heroes of the world's history. Take from the Congregational polity the autonomy of the local church,

as the bequest of the Great Head of the Church, and you take from it the only reason it has for existence—you make it not only a sect, but the meanest of sects, that has no right to a name among the tribes of Israel. If this Congregational freedom means anything, it means that every body of believers shall be at liberty to receive and act upon all the light that shall break upon them from every quarter; and that all the churches of Christ, recognizing in each other this freedom, with its consequent manifoldness of development, shall work out the problem of the unity of Christ's Catholic Church, with a breadth and beauty, an intensity of life and power of co-action, possible upon no other theory of the church.

The sole question for this church, and for every church, having with the right the responsibility of self-government, is this, Will the use of the Psalms responsively assist in accomplishing the ends of worship? It is only pastoral fidelity on my part to say that I think it *will*, and that this conviction has grown upon me with the studies and experiences of a pastorate of more than thirty years. Let me present some

of the reasons for this opinion, and ask you to consider them candidly and prayerfully, and then, in the exercise of your right, and the discharge of your responsibility, decide the question.

1. It ought to be unnecessary to begin by saying, that there can be no harm in it. It is only the reading of the Bible. It does not propose so much as to sing the words, and it would seem that a Quaker even would not object to this use of the Scriptures. It is the reading of the Bible by minister and people taking turns. And if nothing more could be said in its favor, it would apparently be enough, that it would help to fix attention upon the Word of God, banish wandering thoughts, and make the service *real* instead of *formal*. If any man objects, and declines for himself to read, he can have no valid objection against according the privilege to his fellow-worshipper. If a minority only in a congregation desired to worship God in this way, in such a case as this it would be only Christian courtesy, on the part of a majority, to consent. If the children only desired it, this would be reason enough.

It has been said to be an Episcopal way of worship, as if the adoption of it implied a going over to Episcopacy. No one can say this, who understands the use of language. Episcopacy is not a mode of worship, but of Church polity. Congregationalism is not a mode of worship, but of polity. Each system would exist intact, in every necessary feature, were their forms of worship interchanged; were the book ours, and free prayer theirs. It is simply absurd, therefore, to say that the use of the Psalms responsively is Episcopal. They read the Psalter thus, it is true, and their ministers read the Bible as well; and it is as reasonable to say, that it is Episcopal for ministers to read the Bible to their people, as to say, that the alternate reading of the Psalter by minister and people is. These two parts of Divine Service came into the English Church at the Reformation; they are there in the interest of Protestantism, and the Christianity of the earliest ages. They are defences against ritualism. You look in vain for them in the Roman Catholic Church. You look in vain for them, also, in the Romanizing portion of the English Church. Where

ritualists order the worship, they uniformly take responses from the people, and give them to the choir. We are bound as Protestants, and particularly as Congregational Protestants, to stand by these two features of the Book of Common Prayer, and sympathize with that portion of the Episcopal Church which adheres to responsive reading.

But apart from this, it should be a pleasure to us, to approximate our fellow Christians of other names, in every permissible way. It is our duty to do so. While Christ is praying for the unity of all believers, and his prayer is ours, we should do all we can do, in the way of consenting faith and worship, to express the oneness of Christians. Especially should we delight to do this, by the responsive use of the Psalms, which has the sanction of all antiquity, was the worship of the Church, when she bore witness to her faith with her blood, the worship of Apostles, of Christ himself, of kings and prophets, of David, of the Church under both dispensations.

2. But it is too little to say, there is no harm in it. There is great good in it; and a plain

and deep philosophy to explain the good it does. It is a fact in human nature, that we must take part in a thing, personally to feel it, and be wholly in it. A thought, or emotion, is doubly, trebly our own, when we give expression to it. The mouth has much to do with the heart; the hands and the feet have, indeed all the members of the body, they are "instruments of righteousness unto God," but the mouth most of all. "With the heart," St. Paul says, "man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The utterance of the lips reacts upon the heart, to deepen the feeling, and make more distinct the thought. David calls the tongue the glory of his frame. "O God! my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory." "Awake up, my glory, awake psaltery and harp, I myself will awake early." "Thou hast girded me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent." In the sixty-third Psalm, which the early Church called the Initiatory Psalm, because they sang it at the beginning of the morning worship, David says, "because thy loving-kindness is better than life,

my lips shall praise thee." It is natural, well-nigh inevitable, to say with the mouth what we deeply feel in the heart. We cannot worthily show forth the praise of God without using the voice. It is therefore Christian wisdom to order the worship of God, so that each worshipper may have some part in it. In family worship employ your own voice and your children's; in the greater family of the church, let it be possible for all voices to unite in some part of the service. If all could sing, or chant, this would answer the purpose, and meet the want inseparable from human hearts. But in all congregations, there is not an inconsiderable number, who can neither sing nor chant, and who have the same yearning to utter, in some way, the praise of God; they ought to do it, and they can do it only by reading. It is the wisdom of the Church, therefore, not only to allow, but to assist the whole congregation to use this mode of worship. It is a duty to multiply means of grace, until the necessities of all classes are provided for, and not a worshipper that can and wants to unite, is denied the privilege.

3. It is, in this connection, a strong reason for

introducing this use of the Psalms into the public worship of God in the great congregation, that the children in the Sunday Schools have long been accustomed to it, and having been brought up to it, they will enjoy and profit by this participation in the service. It will be a new and tender bond binding together old and young, parents and children, in the common worship of God, before whom disparity of age dwindles to a point.

> "What are all prayers beneath,
> But cries of babes, that cannot know
> Half the deep thought they breathe?
> In his own words we Christ adore;
> But angels, as we speak,
> Higher above our meaning soar,
> Than we, o'er children weak."

This, at least, is certainly true, that if it be wrong, or inexpedient for adults to worship in this way, it is quite as much so to train our children to it in the Sunday School. But it will not be easy to extirpate the practice from our schools; it has approved itself, by experience, to superintendents and teachers, and it has already

accomplished much by enlisting in the worship the hearts of the children, along with their voices.

4. And what is true of the Sunday School has been found no less true of the larger school of the Church. Congregations, that have employed the Psalms responsively, have found the practice useful and delightful.* It has made more interesting the worship of God; banished listlessness and indifference; made it possible for some to take part, who previously were compelled to be silent; and by the manifest good effects that have followed, it has answered objections, and approved itself by the warmth and sympathy it has diffused through the assembly. A simple thing in itself, it is a great thing in its influence. It would be a great thing, if it only served, in any measure, to break up inattention, and counteract the tendency of a congregation, that is sung to, and preached to, to be mere spectators of the worship of God. The principle that lies at the root of this, if there be any principle in it, is hierarchical not popular, rit-

* Note VI., p. 58.

ual not spiritual. Men do not come to church, or ought not, to witness a spectacle, or have their feelings played upon passively; at least, this is not the Protestant theory. We believe that men are to "work out their own salvation," and that "God works in them to will and to do,"—that true religion is a life, and that salvation is the outcome of a co-operation between man and God, and consequently the services of God's house should not only teach a man to do something at once, but also give him the opportunity. It contradicts our theology to exclude the people from worship, and divide it all between minister and choir. It robs the sabbath of a large part of its power as a preface to the week, to give the people nothing to do. It is not enough to instruct, it is necessary also to train. Knowledge is in order to action; by using, men make the good gifts of God their own. And this is as true of the first day, as of the other six days of the week; it applies to the sanctuary, as to all other places. There is, therefore, a solemn responsibility resting upon our churches, to order the worship of God so as

to make it the most effective for good. To a large extent, as at present conducted, it is inoperative and repellent. It may be made, to as great an extent, an attraction to the house of God, and a help in the way of life. But to do this, the people must have part in it. They should pray, and sing, and read, as well as hear. Whatever makes the worship more social, more general and universal, widens and deepens its influence; whatever tends to make it official and exclusive, removes it from popular sympathy, and tends to the oldest and worst heresy of the Christian Church, that religion is the business of a class, and that the grace of God is derived from sacraments, not from the Word of God. Congregational singing has the wonderful power it has, because it expresses community of feeling. And this must be expressed in any movement that carries the people with it. So the Church has made progress in all the great eras of its history. So the German Reformation became a popular enthusiasm. So Methodism triumphed. So armies have marched to battle, prepared to accept victory or death; and such a spirit must be victorious. Nations

have been great, and their annals illustrious, as their hearts have been in their national songs, and they have used this means of massing themselves in one. I am not claiming for responsive readings an undue influence; I do not think they equal the influence that popular hymns and songs exert as they are chanted and sung. Singing is the natural medium by which highly wrought feeling expresses itself, and musical notes have a distinctive power of their own. But the mingling of many voices, in the recitation of psalms, is of the nature of singing; and displacing, as it does, no other form, while it draws forth voices that otherwise were silent, it enlarges the province and multiplies the methods of common worship. And for this purpose it is invaluable—we cannot dispense with it, so long as only in this way *all* the people can participate in the service. And is it not, in itself, a blessed and fruitful thing, to repeat, in unison with a consenting congregation, the most consecrated words of the language, freighted with the dearest memories of the Church of God! How blessed the privilege to each worshipper, to utter for himself these consecrated words of

prayer and praise, and find himself not alone, but up-borne by a sea of voices, and in fellowship, not only with companions and friends about him, but with the praising Church of all ages! And what a fellowship is this, made possible to us by the use of these Psalms of David; how we join ourselves to "the glorious company of the apostles," "the goodly fellowship of the prophets," "the noble army of martyrs," "the holy church throughout all the world;" how near we come to Moses, and David, and David's Son; how their words become our words, their thoughts our thoughts, and their God our God!

5. Finally, let me end as I began, with reminding you of the supreme importance of worship. It is our training here, and our destiny hereafter. All things are subordinated to it. The preaching of the Gospel is but a means to it. True, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe;" but believers are saved, that they may worship, and their eternal life is in it. We must know the Gospel, that we may know the God and Saviour we have to worship; and that we may have

hearts to do it, we need God's Holy Spirit, whose office-work is a preparation for worship. Regeneration is the birth of it, and the in-dwelling of the Spirit of God the life of it. Whatever, therefore, qualifies us the better for this—whatever facilitates the expression of it, and deepens the desire for it, is contributing most directly and most powerfully to God's highest glory, in us and by us. And while this is true of us individually, it is no less true of us collectively in our church estate. The matter and mode of our worship is of more importance to the souls of men, and the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom, than the articulation and systematizing of our doctrinal belief. The theology we put into our prayers, and confessions, and thanksgivings, is that part of it which has most to do with human salvation; and it is Christian doctrine in its most sacred relation to the soul, leading to Christ, and doing the work of sanctification.

In addition to this, let us bear in mind that the subject of worship must become more and more a subject of care and study to the Church. In the beginning, when Christianity was first

promulged, and now where the Missionary or Evangelist goes to publish the Gospel to the destitute, preaching is, of necessity, the great business and chief duty. But after this, when churches are organized, when the doctrines of the Gospel are understood, and a Christian sentiment is established, worship becomes so important as to occupy the first place; for it is Christianity applied, the religion of Christ in exercise, it becomes the hunger of a soul truly converted, and it is the medium through which come to the believer his sweetest joys and best experiences. And then again, as culture advances, culture of mind and heart, as the work of Christian civilization widens and deepens, as Christian character assumes a higher type, as our homes become the abode of greater purity, gentleness and peace, and society is leavened by a more pervasive sense of eternal things, worship will demand and receive a more thoughtful and prayerful study, and its methods become more various, and beautiful, and spiritual. There is even now an increasing number of persons whose spiritual wants require less preaching and more worshipping; they accept the system of divine truth as

revealed in the Scriptures, and do not need to have these fundamental doctrines re-stated and argued, possibly on a lower key and with less power; but they do want opportunities and offices, by which they can express, with all the depth and tenderness the Word of God puts within their reach, the penitence and faith, the joy and hope with which these great truths fill their souls. And it is not only a matter of culture, but of spiritual experience and growth as well. Not a few are finding in the social prayer-meetings of the church a strength and refreshment they do not find in the less spiritual services of the sanctuary. God also has, of late years, signally honored the humbler gatherings of his people for prayer and praise in the conversion of sinners.

For all these reasons I commend to you the ordering of the worship of God in the sanctuary, and pray you to make use especially of what the Scriptures put within your reach in the Psalms, as one means of engaging all the people in some part of the service. Study to know better the resources of the Book of God, as a treasury of "sound words," fitted to be forms of prayer and

praise for all persons. Study to have something in every service, that every comer to the sanctuary may make use of it, if he will. Do not discourage the people saying "Amen, at thy giving of thanks," if their hearts prompt them thus to make the prayer their own. Let the children have something to say and do. If old enough to read, let them read with the great congregation. If too young to read, and only able to syllable "Our Father," let their tiny voices mingle with the deeper tones of fathers and mothers, as all together express their common childhood before our common Father who is in Heaven. "Both young men and maidens; old men and children: let them praise the name of the Lord. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth. Praise God in his sanctuary. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

NOTES.

NOTE I.—PAGE 11.

I am greatly indebted to that distinguished Biblical scholar, Rev. Thomas J. Conant, D.D., for a learned and valuable letter, written after reading a report of this sermon, published in the New York *Daily Witness*. He says of it:

"I read the report of your sermon with very great interest and pleasure. I fully agree with you in your main position in regard to the propriety and the utility of the responsive reading of the Psalms in the public services of the sanctuary. I hope you will continue to urge this subject on the attention of churches and congregations. Of the propriety and utility of the practice which you advocate, no Christian disciple can surely have any doubt. For many years I have been in the habit of saying that our mode of conducting the services of the sanctuary has banished God's Word from his house. The little that is read from the Bible is

scarcely attended to, the congregation taking no part in it. Few take a Bible to the house of God, having little or no use for it there."

I am beholden to Dr. Conant for the following information in regard to the synagogue worship:

"I have looked, as the occasion offered, into the authorities on the primitive synagogue service. I fear it is not practicable to establish anything more than is intimated in the New Testament. Aside from that, nothing appears to be known of the synagogue service till after the destruction of the Second Temple. What it then gradually became, as inferred from writings of considerably later date, you find briefly stated in the paragraph commencing near the top of page 14, in the Introduction to Lange's Commentary on the Psalms. The allusion to 'hymns in rhyme' (pismon), in the recitation of which the congregation united, answering with passages from the Bible in other responses, is from the work of Zunz, on the *Synagogue Poetry of the Middle Ages*, p. 89 (full title not given by Lange). On the preceding page (p. 88), Zunz speaks of another practice, the congregation repeating sentences after the leader, or interposing brief ejaculations. Nothing can be inferred, therefore, as to the

earliest practice of the synagogue. The article *Synagogue*, in Smith's Bible Dictionary, is shamefully meagre. The same article in the 2d edition of Kitto's Biblical Cyclopedia, by Ginsburg, the most competent man in England for such a service, is very thorough and nearly exhaustive."

NOTE II.—PAGE 13.

Dr. Conant, in the letter from which I have quoted above respecting the synagogue worship, says:

"Of the practice of the early Christian Church, the most important ancient testimony is the expression you refer to in Pliny's letter to Trajan (Lib. X., Ep. 97). Doering, the best editor of Pliny's epistles, commenting on the words, *Carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem* (in German, which I take the liberty to translate), says: 'Although it is not to be denied that *carmen* is also used of a solemn form of prayer or utterance, (Paneg. 53, 92), yet it is very probable that as early as that time the Christians called upon the Deity in songs.' Tertullian, Apol. 2, says expressly, *ad*

canendum Christo ut Deo. In early times, and this is matter of fact, antiphonies became usual in the Christian Church (and to this *secum invicem* points, which Herbst falsely translates *in common, together,* and Giesig even regards as cumbersome and superfluous), the presbyter leading off, and the congregation repeating or responding. Naturally their utterances or prayers took on a kind of melody; and Herder assumes, expressly referring to this passage, that the Psalms were then used as being fittest for it, the parallelism of itself favoring a kind of chant."

The chief work on ancient and mediæval hymnology, is by H. A. Daniel—*Thesaurus hymnologicum, sive hymnorum, canticorum, sequentiarum collectio amplissima.* Vols. I.–V. 8vo. 1847–56. It is the most complete collection of the sacred poetry of the ancient and mediæval church. It is in the Astor Library. The next most complete collection of Latin hymns, with a few in Greek, is by F. J. More—*Lateinische Hymnen des Mittelalters,* &c. Vols. I.–III. 8vo. The introduction and notes are in the German language. It is in the Astor Library.

Thirteen ancient Greek hymns, mostly from

the Old and New Testaments, are inserted after the Psalms in the Alexandrine MS. of the Greek version of the Old Testament; among them a morning hymn, of which the still older form given by Daniel is the original of the *Gloria in Excelsis.*

NOTE III.—PAGE 17.

The doctrine of the apostle evidently is that the Christian Church answers now to the priesthood of the ancient dispensation; that either separately or together they constitute the temple of God; and that their praises and prayers are the sacrifices that take the place of the material offerings, made formerly by an order of men in a material house, and by outward things. The sacrifices of the law were types and prophecies of Christ, and so ceased to be offered in material forms, when Christ came and made an offering of himself "once for all." So the temple and the priesthood represented him, and ceased in him. Now it is the profound and animating doctrine of the New Testament that the Christian Church, the creation of Christ's atoning

sacrifice, and the recipient of his sanctifying Spirit, stands in his place, receives his name, and in him becomes temple, priest, and sacrifice. It is a doctrine covering much more ground than that of formal worship. Christians present themselves to God, "their bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1), the world becomes one vast temple, every Christian's life a psalm. Sacrifices, now, are not "bulls and goats," but "the fruit of lips giving thanks to God;" and "to do good and communicate," not the incense of a burning censer, is "an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." Christian worship in the sanctuary, and on the Lord's Day, is only the first-fruits of the week it prefaces; it is a sign only of the higher and better worship, of which the living spirit is the offering, and life the service. The greater, however, of necessity, includes the less. If the whole meaning of the ancient ritual is now to be found in the body of Christian believers, if they are *house, priest, sacrifice*, altogether, much more is God's public worship to be performed, not by officers and representatives of the church, but by the church itself.

Leighton, in his comment upon the text, says, "As the worship and ceremonies of the Jewish

Church were all shadows of Jesus Christ, and have their accomplishment in him, not only after a singular manner in his own person, but in a derived way in his mystical body, his church; the priesthood of the law represented him as the great High Priest, that 'offered up himself for our sins,' and that is altogether incommunicable; neither is there any peculiar office of priesthood for offering sacrifice in the Christian Church, but his alone who is head of it. But this dignity that is here mentioned of a 'spiritual priesthood' offering 'spiritual sacrifice,' is common to all those that are in Christ; as they are living stones built on him into a spiritual temple, so they are priests of that same temple made by him. Rev. 1:6. As he was, after a transcendent manner, temple, and priest, and sacrifice; so, in their kind, are Christians all these three through him; and by his Spirit that is in them, their offerings through him are made acceptable."

NOTE IV.—PAGE 19.

No one who has worshipped of late years, in the dissenting congregations of England and Scotland,

has failed to notice the ease and heartiness with which the Psalms are chanted, and apparently by all the people. It has given new life and power to non-liturgical forms of worship in those lands. The eminent, and now venerable, Rev. Thomas Binney, testifies in strong terms to the benefits accruing from this practice in the *Weigh-house Chapel.* Rev. Henry Allon,* of London, says: "God has not given us a Christian David. No book of inspired song contributes to the canon of the New Testament. Among manifold reasons, perhaps, for this—that in the Jewish psalms a sufficient provision of Biblical song is made for the religious life of humanity. We never think of these Psalms as the psalter of the Jewish Church only. We instinctively feel that they have a broader character, and are designed for a more Catholic use. We of this nineteenth Christian century have no expressions for our various religious experiences so adequate as David's. When we pray most fervently, we use his words; when we praise the most rapturously, we seize his harp."

"Let the rhythmical psalm be properly sung," he says, "and the flexibility of the chant will en-

* Ecclesia. The Worship of the Church, p. 438.

able a more deliberate and reverent, a more articulate and emphatic, because a more natural expression, than even in the metrical hymn. In the rhythmical psalm, any time may be taken that the articulation of words and meaning may require; words may be grouped, emphasis may be given according to the sense, all the delicate lights and shades of meaning may be perfectly and easily preserved. In refusing, therefore, to sing the Bible Psalms to their fitting music, simply because in the Romish and Anglican churches they had been sung irreverently, our Puritan forefathers permitted themselves to be driven into an extreme, which was a far more serious impoverishment of worship-song than their interdict upon liturgies and organs; the latter were but modes, the former was part of the very substance of Divine song. We can only urge as their excuse, that they fought an arduous battle, and to save their citadel often had to raise their suburbs. Far more justifiable were they than some among ourselves, who make their necessity our choice, and determine that the beautiful suburbs of our sacred city shall continue to be desolate. They thought that the best corrective of abuse was disuse; we continue to disuse, because indolence or blind tradition hinders us from justly determining

the use. The conclusion of reason and common sense is, that we sing each kind of sacred song to the music that is adapted to it—a rhythmical psalm to an unmetrical chant—a metrical hymn to a metrical tune. It is equally preposterous to change the form of the rhythmical psalm, that it may fit a metrical tune; and to change the form of a rhythmical chant, that it may fit a metrical hymn."

In the same volume,* which consists of Essays on Church Problems, edited by Dr. Reynolds, President of Cheshunt College, Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, writing of the "Congregationalism of the Future," uses the following language:

"The opposition to the chanting of psalms and passages of Scripture is unintelligible from the Nonconformist point of view. Dissenters have always been distinguished by their reverence for God's Word, and there seems, therefore, to be strange inconsistency in their objection to use the inspired words in their songs of praise, with the notion that by employing hymns they escape the taint of Romanism or Anglicanism. Strange to say, on the opposite side, an excessive use of hymns

* Ecclesia. First Series, p. 478.

appears to be becoming a sign of Ritualism, and we may expect to see the Evangelicals regarding them with suspicion. Looked at, abstractedly, however, the opposition to the chanting of psalms on the ground of a principle is a peculiarity of Dissenting life which can be traced to nothing but strong antipathy to Anglican practices. It has not a vestige of argument to allege in its favor, and is at best a mere traditional prejudice which would soon yield to the influence of a more truly Catholic spirit. There might, of course, still be churches who would hesitate to adopt the practice in their own worship on grounds of expediency, but theirs is an entirely different position from that of those who object to the Psalms, not because it is difficult for a congregation to render them effectively, but because it is disloyal to Dissenting principles to chant them at all—an objection which, it must be frankly owned, is nothing more than an expression of sectarian narrowness."

We are, in this country, happily free from some of the difficulties with which our more enlightened brethren in the mother country are contending, and which are due to the presence and overshadowing influence of an Established Church. Such controversies, at once religious and political,

are embittering and narrowing in their effect upon most minds, and especially upon those who keenly feel the injustice done their intelligent and conscientious belief. But we, in this country, have our work to do, a work not less difficult in our circumstances, and still more important with reference to the future of Christ's church. It would be a shame, indeed, if in this free land, and with our costly inheritance of a reformed faith, we should give up all our advantages, and fall behind the apostles of Romanism, and the reactionaries of our own Protestant communions. If Romanizers and Ritualists get the popular ear, and make headway against our historic Protestantism, they will be fairly entitled to their success, for it will be by the use of a more enlightened freedom, fighting us with our own weapons, while we sink into a dead, and in us shamefully inconsistent formalism.

The following remarks by Mr. Rogers are not less pertinent in this country than in England; and they are as instructive, as they are just: "The Ritualists, it must be confessed, have taught all parties a lesson in this respect. They have claimed for themselves a freedom that to an outsider seems scarcely compatible with obedience to the laws of their own church, and in the exercise of it they

have endeavored to graft upon their system plans which seemed to be good and successful, and at the same time not inconsistent with their own Catholic principles, in the practices of other churches. They have borrowed largely from Methodism, as well as from Romanism; and though they have sometimes caricatured the usages they have introduced, there has been no unwillingness to forsake old paths, when they could find new ones which promised to conduct them more rapidly and certainly to the goal which they have in view. So little sympathy have they with the stately dignity hitherto associated with High Churchism, they have been ready to avail themselves of any or every expedient which seemed likely to secure a greater amount of popular sympathy and attention. They have had recourse to the preached instead of the written sermon. They have introduced considerable variety in the style and form of service. They have studied the wants of the people, and the means which other parties have adopted in order to meet them; and those who least approve of the ends they have been seeking are, nevertheless, bound to command not only the zeal and industry with which they have worked, but also the anxiety they have shown to become all things to all men, that

so they might by all means gain some. Surely others may profit by their example, and while retaining all that is felt to be essential, cultivate that practical wisdom which seeks to comprehend the circumstances and demands of the age, and to provide for them accordingly. Congregationalists should be the first to emancipate themselves from a bondage to mere traditionalism, and to show a true catholicity by gathering wisdom in every quarter, and profiting by the experience of other churches for the improvement of their own organization."

NOTE V.—PAGE 22.

I am indebted to the Rev. Leonard Bacon, D.D., of New Haven, for a letter, in which he says: "I have read, with approval, your sermon on the use of the Psalms in public worship. On one point I think your position might be strengthened. Look into John Robinson's works, Vol. III., p. 434, and you will see that the Pilgrims (though they did not use the Psalms *responsively*), were resolute psalm-singers, as the Scotch Presbyterians now are. The passage is in his Brief Catechism concerning Church Government, and it is this:

"'Q. 37. What is required touching the singing of psalms in the church?

"'Ans. That they be such as are parts of the Word of God, formed by the Holy Ghost into psalms or songs, which many may conveniently sing together, exhorting and admonishing themselves mutually with grace in their hearts.'

"So Davenport and Hooker, in the New Haven Catechism [reprinted New Haven, 1853], says, p. 54:

"'Q. What is required concerning singing of psalms in the church?

"'A. Singing of psalms in the church is an ordinance to be performed not only by the ministers, but also by the whole assembly; the psalms thus sung must be such parts of Scripture as the Holy Ghost hath formed into verse to be sung; exhorting and admonishing themselves, mutually with grace in their hearts, making melody in their hearts to the Lord.'

"Nothing in the worship of our modern Congregational churches would so displease John Robinson and John Davenport (if they could come into the Lord's Day assembly with their old sympathies and antipathies unchanged), than to find a mere hymn-book, instead of the Bible Psalms—not even Watts'

imitation of the Psalms—and the service of song vicariously rendered through a hired quartette, or an amateur choir, perched up in an organ-loft. If this modern singing of hymns by a choir is commended as anti-Episcopal, the answer is that much more is it anti-Puritan. Holding it up and contending for it to the exclusion of the Psalms, in the name of Puritanism, is ludicrously absurd."

NOTE VI.—PAGE 34.

The proposition being before the Church to replace the *Plymouth Collection* by the *Songs of the Sanctuary*, and at the same time to introduce the responsive reading of the Psalter, according to the arrangement of lessons by the Rev. Dr. Storrs, the foregoing discourse was preached on Sunday, Nov. 10, 1873, and on the following Wednesday the change was voted by a very large majority. A new and improved edition of the latter book being at that time in press, the new mode of worship was not introduced until the New Year. Some three months experience has now been had, and the results have been eminently satisfactory. The con-

gregation have made the responses with great unanimity and heartiness; the pastor has read with careful deliberation and emphasis, the congregation have responded in like manner—there has been no haste and jumbling as some have objected; and the whole effect, alike upon minister and people, has been elevating and inspiring. It has aided the devotional spirit, and given new zest and interest to the service.

LETTERS.

The substance of the sermon was published in the New York *Daily Witness*, and copies sent to several distinguished pastors and clergymen, who were known to have had experience in the use of the Psalter, or whose views were sought on the general subject. The gentlemen consulted have all of them replied with eminent courtesy, and, as will be seen, with singular unanimity of sentiment.

Rev. George B. Bacon, D. D., of Orange Valley, New Jersey, writes:

"I have read with great satisfaction the sermon preached to your people a few weeks ago, urging the use of the Book of Psalms in responsive worship, and I am greatly pleased to hear that your church, by a large majority, has voted to accept the recommendation of the sermon, and to use the Psalms, in such responsive reading, in their public

worship hereafter. It is now more than six years since my own church, almost without a dissenting voice, voted to introduce this new practice. We have had time to make the experiment of it thoroughly. It is impossible for me to tell you how much good has already come from it.

"The use of the Psalms in parallelisms, as they were written, and as their structure clearly shows they were intended to be used, is abundantly proved to be a natural, simple, every way unobjectionable form of prayer and praise. We all feel, I believe, that we never knew the value of the Book of Psalms, as by this use of it we have learned its value. Last Sunday, for example, we read the fifty-first Psalm. It gave tone (as I could see, and the people *felt*) to the whole service following. On baptismal Sundays we read the 103d Psalm, and in the use of it the people feel the sacred beauty of the ordinance in which the "righteousness of the Lord unto children's children" is involved and recognized. At the Lord's Supper we read in concert that 'hymn,' which they sung before 'they went out into the Mount of Olives,' (the 118th Psalm.) And that holy feast has a new sacredness and beauty to me, and to the whole church, as we say the words which Jesus said with his disciples,—

'I shall not die but live;
Open to me the gates of righteousness;
The stone which the builders refused
Is become the head-stone of the corner;
Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord;
Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of
the altar.'

Nothing like the same effect could be produced by the simple *hearing* of these words; but, as we all take them on our lips together, it is grand, and the stimulus to devotion is of the greatest value!

"We have now used the responsive reading long enough to have become attached to it, and would, I am sure, be conscious of a most serious loss, if we were to give it up. It is, let me say, a great improvement, as to method, over that in use in the Episcopal churches. The reading of alternate *verses* is often confused and confusing. The reading of alternate parallelisms is natural, simple, rhythmical, and every way delightful. The only criticism, which I should make upon your sermon, is that it does not clearly enough point out this peculiarity of *structure* in the Psalms, which fits them, and even (I may almost say) *requires* them to be put to just this use. Sometimes, in our Sunday Schools, the historical, or narrative, or

argumentative portions of Scripture are read responsively. This is always harsh and awkward, and no other good came from it than the fixing of the attention on the reading. But to use the Psalms in this responsive style is to use them for worship, and it will be hard for any one taking upon his lips these prayers and praises, not to feel them in his heart.

"I have the smallest sympathy with any movement in the direction of a man-made liturgy, or any merely ornamental change of our traditional order of worship. But this change is not of that sort. It is because it makes our worship more congregational, that I value it. It is because it is *not* an innovation, but a return to the primitive method, as the Apostles used it, as Christ the Lord used it, and as David and the Jewish Church, while waiting for the advent of David's greater Son, used it. Nothing would induce me to give up a method in itself so excellent and so inspired, and in its associations so hallowed and so inspiring.

"I have spoken for myself chiefly in this note; but I believe I speak what is the growing conviction of my people, that this responsive use of the book of Psalms supplies a want in our worship, of which we were dimly conscious before, but which

the supply of it makes more and more clear to us. If your people will use it, it will not take them long to discover that it is what they have wanted, and to wonder why they did not come to it before. Especially you will find that the children in all your families will find a pleasure and a profit in the new method."

Rev. E. P. Goodwin, D. D., pastor of the First Congregational Church, Chicago, writes:

"I have become greatly interested in this matter of responsive readings, and specially so since our experiment. We *hit* upon them in a rather unusual way. I had long felt the lack of the people's participation in the Sabbath service, both as respects the barrenness of the service itself, conducted solely by the pulpit, and also the listlessness and coldness, not to say indifference, characteristic of the earlier portions of the worship.

"But how to bring about any change was a puzzle. Neither the people nor myself had any sympathy with ritualism—were, indeed, alike by temperament,

faith, and education, strongly opposed to it. Then a number of good brethren claimed to have tried the experiment, and demonstrated its impracticability among churches of our order. The result was that I determined to take the risks, and make trial for myself. So, without consulting so much as a *deacon*—without a word of previous debate in committee, or before the church—I invited the people to bring their Bibles. And on the next Sabbath, when the time came for the Scripture lesson, I merely suggested that it would be pleasant possibly to read it together, and invited all who felt so disposed to read alternately with me. I own my heart thumped a little anxiously, as I thought of the possibility of having to do all the reading myself; but the goodly array of Bibles assured me, and, when after my verse, a full half or more of the congregation broke out in clear, full response, you can imagine my surprise and delight. We started with the 23d Psalm, and before we were half through no prophet was needed to predict the issue. By those indubitable tokens, which tell when people's hearts flow together, it was manifest that we were to have no debate in the matter. And thus, without a word of argument or exhortation, the whole question settled itself. *The trial*

reading was so good that everybody wanted more; and so we have kept on reading, and with increasing satisfaction and profit.

"The results are obvious. The whole congregation has come to feel a personal interest in the service, and looks forward to it with desire. Whatever restlessness used to show itself in the earlier portions of the worship has been dissipated. Spiritual desires and feelings have been evidently quickened, and the Lord's house made to have a warmer atmosphere. I think I do not mistake in saying that the unison of voices all through the sanctuary, now in praise, now in prayer, now in the words of David, now of Jesus (coupled with our Introductory Service, in which all sing the Doxology, and then at the close of the Invocation unite in the Lord's Prayer), very greatly deepens the flow of feeling, and starts the worship of the day—if I may so say—at a higher tide than we are wont to know. While, as for myself, no feature of our worship more sensibly stimulates and inspires me, and puts me in trim for preaching.

"I am quite sure I do not overstate my conviction of the feasibility of introducing responsive readings among our pilgrim folk, and of their being made a most enjoyable and spiritually fruitful part of the

service. My experience fully accords with yours, and I do not believe my people could be persuaded to relinquish the readings, and return to the old barren, *un*-congregational way of worship."

Rev. N. J. Burton, D. D., pastor of the Park Congregational Church, Hartford, Ct., writes:

"The people of my congregation have participated in the reading of the Psalms in our public services for several years now; and the practice has fully justified itself. I hear of no opposition to it; all take hold; and I think that a proposition to return to the old way of silence would overwhelmingly fail.

"As to your sermon which you sent me, I do not know that I have any suggestion to make, unless I say that when you speak of the philosophy of responsive worship, you make a good argument for a participation by the people, even beyond responsive reading. I do not mention this, however, in the way of criticism, for I believe the people might, to advantage, be brought in at several other points

in the service, as they are in fact in some of our churches, though in mine they do nothing more than read the Psalter, and recite the Lord's Prayer at the close of the main prayer in the morning."

Rev. O. E. Daggett, D.D., of New London, Conn., says:

"I have read your sermon on responsive reading, with entire satisfaction, both as to the argument and the style. No suggestions occur to me toward addition, omission, or change, as I do not see how it could be amended for the purposes you have in view.—Of course I approve of responsive reading of the Psalms, and other devotional Scriptures; and my chief drawback in the movement is the sluggishness in so many congregations in *executing* it when adopted. It seems to me, also, that some other things are hardly less, or not less desirable, such as the 'Apostles' Creed,' 'Lord's Prayer,' 'Confession,' and 'Thanksgiving,' and an interval of 'Silent Worship,' and some minor 'articulations,' as I call them, anatomically, of the services. I would say also, daily worship, and more

frequent communion. Then, time brings me to see, more than formerly, the sort of paralysis, or, at best, dryness in the Church, and even more in too many of the ministry, not in the brain-work of speculation, but in the heart-work of worship. If there were only the waiting readiness for the true afflatus!"

Rev. Horace Bushnell, D.D., writes:

"You make, on the whole, in your sermon—this is what I would say—a very cumulative and impressive argument. And I heartily agree with you in it. If we go back a little on the Puritans, I would do it with some delicacy, as Shem and Japhet did in the covering of their father; for, if the strong wine of Reformation had stripped them over-much, they are still to be honored as the new-time fathers of a better future, and re-populated world. There is certainly a sad want of consent and co-activity in our worship. Being for all, all should have a share in it, and a communion of voices in it, on the way to a communion of saints. There are things in the Psalms that belong

to their age, and not to ours; the grand thing is, that they are so largely for ours, and fit to be the type of our more Christ-ed and matured worship. At the same time, a good deal more care needs to be given, than there sometimes has been, to the distribution of the lines for recital."

Rev. T. D. Woolsey, D.D., etc., late President of Yale College, writes a most interesting and instructive letter, from which I am permitted to make the following quotation:

"Any changes in the present received congregational worship, in order to be permanent and useful, should meet a demand, and conform to a change of feeling in society, which, while it does not oppose, but rather furthers the religious emotions, is likely to be lasting, and not to give place to the contrary tendency.

What now is the state of the denomination, and what can be done to aid it in a religious way? The leading faults, or defects of Congregationalism are, as it seems to me,—1. A want of a common spirit.

There is no special attachment to the church polity, and no other uniting bond. 2. An irreligious departure, in some respects, from the condition of better times. I refer to easier lapse into false doctrine, ignorance, or want of interest in the truth, making preaching of too much relative importance to worship, a neglect of the religious sentiments, an ungodly way of getting through with the singing, etc. I am writing to-day, Sunday evening, after being present at a church, where they have never succeeded in having religious church-music, and I said to myself, Will not religion in the heart, if there is enough of it, reform such abuses? 3. The sentiment of reverence for the day, occasion, place, and for a present God, is one of the nobler human feelings, which the freedom of the Gospel does not interfere with, and which does not interfere with freedom. And yet this sentiment is little visible in this country, and especially, as it seems to me, in our churches. It must be confessed that our precise, formulated, logical doctrine cultivates the intellect chiefly, and thus the sentiments are chilled, and half dead. But now, doctrine is little cared for; and there are few laymen, I apprehend, who have much distinct faith, or much inward knowledge of the Bible.

Worldly prosperity, with its immoralities, is destroying faith, more than science and history. Hence we must look for greater infidelity in the future, more avowed foes of religion, unless God in his own way disappoints our fears.

"It seems to me that your desire of a change in the services is a confession of a want. Others make the same confession. We cannot shut our eyes to the going off from us of many to the Episcopal Church, nor to the want of really religious worship, nor to possible dangers in the future.

"Now, as to what you especially wish, I should have no objections in general. I could concur in it with pleasure. And yet I should not anticipate so much effect from it as you seem to do. Shall I say also that I should rather have selections from the Psalms, leaving out the imprecatory ones, or denunciatory, as some would call them, and adding to the rest some of the most edifying passages of Scripture fitted for responses.

"It would be grateful, very grateful to me, to have some of the best small chants regularly introduced into our worship, such as 'The Lord is in his holy temple, Let all the earth keep silence before him;' I never hear this, and 'I was glad when they said unto me,' and some others, without the

profoundest feelings being excited, so that I would go no small distance to have them renewed. I should be glad also to have written prayers for the President of the United States, Congress, special meetings, as the American Board, times of general illness, etc., a small collect for occasions, the wants of which can be expressed in a definite form of words. Above all, I should desire to have our present choir system greatly altered. You are aware that the Geneva gown kept its ground for a long time in this country. I should be willing to have it brought back again.—I would only repeat that the practice of responsive reading would, in my eyes, be of less practical value than some other changes, such as appeal to religious feeling, and to reverence more particularly; yet I should accept it."

I take great satisfaction in adding to these valuable testimonies, the following interesting letter from the honored pastor of the Church of the Pilgrims, Rev. R. S. Storrs, Jr., D.D., at whose side it has been my happiness to labor in the Christian ministry for a period of eighteen years:

"The same change in the order of Sunday worship which has recently been made in the Clinton Avenue Church, and to which your sermon so effectively contributed, was made in the Church of the Pilgrims, as you are aware, eight years ago, in 1865. The proposal for this change was not introduced by me, though, after it had been made, it had my constant and energetic support. I welcomed it warmly, and supported it strenuously, because it had long seemed to me a strange turning of things upside down, that churches whose government is aristocratic should find their strength in the fact that their worship is social and popular, while our churches, with a democratic government, find their weakness in the fact that their worship is so generally ministerial and exclusive. I knew that this curious reversing of the natural order of things must come to an end sooner or later, and I thought the sooner it was terminated with us the better. So I earnestly advocated the change. I was more desirous of it because of my thorough dislike and dread of the tendency which seemed rapidly advancing among us, as in many congregations of culture and wealth, to make the worship more attractive by making it increasingly elaborate and ornamental in the musical parts. It

seemed to me then, as it does now, that there lay in this tendency a subtle and great danger; that it must in the end, if not arrested, demoralize both the choir and the people—transforming the entire 'worship,' so called, into a simple Sunday concert, with sermon and prayers to furnish the scanty religious trimmings; an arrangement of things under which no minister could work for the Master, with hopeful earnestness and a true consecration. At the same time I felt that this increasing ornamentation of worship revealed a conscious want on the part of congregations, and a dissatisfaction with existing arrangements, which would be more fully as well as more properly met by making the worship not more artistic but more popular and social. I was, therefore, gladly ready to take my full part in advising and urging the proposed change.

"The objections which were made to it, and which were earnestly urged by some excellent and valued members of the church, were such as would naturally be expected to suggest themselves, in the absence of any experience on the subject, and such as I infer from your sermon that you have yourself more lately encountered. The objection was at first prominent that it involved a departure from

the customs of the Pilgrims. But this was soon so thoroughly answered, by the demonstration of the inherent right of each local church to decide for itself in matters of this sort, and by a sketch of the many particulars in which the early customs of New England had already been departed from in our congregations—in regard, for example, to the reading of the Scriptures in church, the prayer of Invocation, the singing of hymns, the use of the organ, of local confessions of faith, postures in worship, the sitting together of families, marriage, funeral services, Sunday schools, prayer meetings, etc., etc.—that *that* objection disappeared pretty early, and hardly lifted its head toward the end of the discussion. Our venerable friend, Dr. Leavitt, lately gone to his rest, made one of the most complete and crushing replies that I ever heard to this objection.

"Another objection, which kept its ground more tenaciously, was that in such a change we should be approximating more or less the Episcopal forms, and educating our worshippers, at least the younger part of them, for the Episcopal service.

"In regard to this point, I remember to have been impressed with the vigorous wisdom of an honored member and officer of the church, who said, in

substance, in reply to it: 'I wish it *did* make our forms more like those of the Episcopalians than it does: for, so long as the discussion between them and us is principally limited to our respective forms of worship, I think we give to them the advantage. If that discussion were out of the way, and the only questions left in debate were of their government or ours, their doctrine or ours, we should regain *our* proper advantage—with the Word and the Spirit of God on our side, and the national tendencies strongly with us.' The church at large, I think, agreed with him, as certainly I did. At any rate, a great majority of the brethren felt that persons were far more likely to be carried into the Episcopal communion by a reaction from the meagreness and baldness of our customary services, than to be educated into it by a larger infusion of the social element into our forms of worship; and that, since the Lord's Prayer and the Psalms neither teach prelatical government nor sacramental grace, there was no great risk of our being led into error in those directions by making use of them in our service. Indeed, before the discussion was over, a conviction which for years had been growing upon me, had lodged itself in other minds: that our former customs had really involved the essential principle of practical Roman-

ism—a vicarious service, performed *for* the people by minister and choir, of which the people were spectators and auditors, but in which they took no personal part; and that the change now proposed was of great importance as favoring a tendency exactly the opposite of that which some had conceived to lie in it. It was, in fact, a repetition of the change which the Reformed Church at Geneva had made three hundred years ago; when, under Calvin, it restored the use of the Psalter to the people, and set the example which the English Church followed. It was a change especially important to us, if we would develope as we ought in our churches the New Testament idea of the common priesthood of believers, and of their equality and brotherhood before Christ.

"After prolonged and earnest discussion, in which these points and others were fully considered, the repeating of the Lord's Prayer by the whole congregation, and the responsive reading of the Psalms, according to the order which you have now adopted, were decided upon among us by a large majority: and those who had been most earnestly opposed to the untried experiment, with very few exceptions, instantly and honorably acquiesced in the change, and did their part to make it successful. During

the eight years that have followed, I have hardly heard a criticism upon the order of worship which was thus introduced. Some of those who at first were most averse to it, now freely admit that it secures a pleasant variety in the services; that it interests and attracts the young, the less educated, and those who have had no musical training; that it makes the Biblical element more prominent in worship, and thus quickens and educates devout feeling in experienced Christians; and that, in practice, it tends to emphasize both the obligation of individuals and the unity of the church in the common and public worship of God.

"Meantime, difficulties that were seriously apprehended by some have wholly vanished from every mind.

"It was thought, at the outset, that other ministers occupying the pulpit might find themselves embarrassed by the unfamiliar order of worship; but no one has ever done so, to my knowledge, except one eminent and excellent brother, the savor of whose good name is in all the churches, who found himself unwilling to read, and proved on trial unable to repeat, the Lord's Prayer. I have no doubt that the momentary embarrassment was to

him so far a means of grace that he could say the prayer now with entire success. During the year and a half in which I was absent from my pulpit, in Europe, the services went on with constant regularity, with no slightest jar, under the lead of I know not how many different ministers; and these very often took pains to express their personal satisfaction and enjoyment in them.

"It was apprehended beforehand, by some, that the changes introduced would tend to render the services 'formal,' and that revivals would thenceforth cease among us. But the most blessed and fruitful of all our seasons of general awakening to the truths of the Gospel came the very next year.

"Some feared that members of other churches, coming to Brooklyn, might be deterred from uniting with us by the difference of our forms from those to which they had been accustomed. But they came afterward more rapidly than before; while with them came others from the Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, Dutch, and Presbyterian churches, attracted by the services in which they and their children could take equal part, which were serious without stiffness, and various without being complicated or long. To such an extent did

this go that we were obliged, as you know, to enlarge our church edifice, four years ago, with much trouble, at large expense, to find room for the families desiring to join us.

"One after another, *all* the objections which at first were urged against the change, and which were wholly legitimate and natural in the absence of any experience of it, have been thoroughly answered by that experience; and I do not believe that to-day the most inconsiderable minority of the church would desire a return to the customs of worship which obtained among us before this change was introduced. Certainly, as to the church at large, it has been consciously compacted, as well as steadily increased, by the change; its members are more reluctant to leave, and more eager to return to it; and it is no more likely to give up in future the responsive reading of the Bible in its services than it is to throw aside its creed, and join itself to the Campbellite Baptists. It enjoys the result to which it came, after discussion, in the wise exercise of its Christian liberty. And no man henceforth will ever rob it of what has approved itself, year after year, a privilege and a help.

"My note is growing to an intolerable length, but I cannot close it without saying that the very discussion through which we passed, in order to the harmonious introduction of this change, was, in itself, and its direct influence, as blessed a thing as has ever occurred in the experience of the church. It was animated, earnest, evoking at times a good deal of feeling on either side; but it was in the main eminently intelligent and Christian, and so it enlightened the minds, and quickened the hearts of the members of the church in proportion to its earnestness. I have always felt that, aside altogether from the happy issue to which it brought us, the discussion itself was of radical and enduring benefit.

"I congratulate you and your church, my dear brother, most heartily, on the similar discussion through which you have passed, and the similar results to which it has brought you. And I pray God that your example, and the excellent teachings of your discourse, may contribute powerfully to lead other churches of our order and faith, throughout the land, to use their liberty in the same direction; and, by making the public worship of God more social and more Biblical, to make

it also more serious, more attractive, more richly instructive, and more vitally inspiring. It is one of my deepest practical convictions, that no body of churches can do the best and widest work for God's kingdom in this country, in which the people are not allowed and taught to take personal and large part in the services of God's house; in which worship by all—'young men and maidens, old men and children'—is not systematically prompted and encouraged; and in which the spirit of adoration and consecration, re-enforced in the heart by being uttered on the lips, is not helped and developed by every service, on every Sunday. Ministers and choirs performing their parts before passive assemblies—no matter how learned and eloquent the one, or how artistic and delightful the other—will no more hold, mould, and quicken the American people, than military bands will decide a campaign, or coruscating rockets set the planet on fire. The whole congregation must praise and pray, and read the Word, with conscious spirit and articulate voice, that it may be filled with the power and passion of Divine love, and the majestic and tender temper of holy obedience.

"Thanking God that after so many years of intimate fellowship and common labor, we still are standing side by side, and praying for His constant and abundant blessing on you, and on your church—than which my own is hardly dearer—I am as ever, my dear brother,

"Truly and affectionately yours,

"R. S. STORRS, JR."